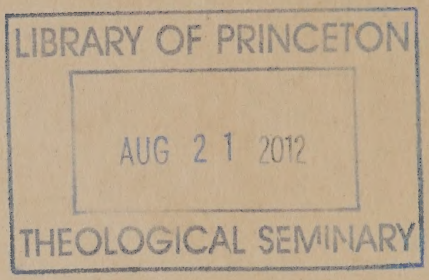
SUMMER SERMONS

ELLIOTT C. B. DARLINGTON



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Darlington, Elliott
Christopher Bearns, 1895-
Summer sermons, preached in the
Church of the heavenly rest

To my old friend
Minford Wolcott Bond
from the author
Elliott C.B. Darlington

Thanksgiving Eve.
1937

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Elliott C. B. Darlington

Summer Sermons

PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF THE HEAVENLY REST AND CHAPEL OF THE BELOVED DISCIPLE, NEW YORK CITY

By
REV. ELLIOTT C. B. DARLINGTON, LL.B.

NEW YORK CHICAGO
Fleming H. Revell Company
LONDON AND EDINBURGH

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Printed in the United States of America

New York: 158 Fifth Avenue
Chicago: 851 Cass Street
London: 21 Paternoster Square
Edinburgh: 99 George Street

To My Parents.

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I

DIVINE COMPENSATION

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

"The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."—ROMANS 8:18.

TODAY, the letter of St. Paul to the Romans brings to us the message of hope in suffering. It is one of the most interesting questions in human life—why we must all endure pain, remorse, and worry—and yet through it all shines the beacon-light of hope. Who will deny that we suffer together? One cannot preach about any one in trouble without, afterwards, some persons in the congregation coming and saying, "You meant me, of course," or "That story from life made me think of myself." Any case of trouble, no matter how unique it may seem, has generally a parallel. How deeply we enjoy this fellowship in suffering! It is truly said that suffering makes the world akin.

The main idea that St. Paul presents is, that suffering is the price of progress. Just so, we have learned, the great book of Basil King was produced when he was struggling with blindness.

The work was the true story of his own adventure in *The Conquest of Fear.* The victory that courage brought to this man has given hope to thousands of others in their struggle with sorrow. That life must be very rare indeed, where there is no struggle and suffering. Even the placid sages and philosophers, by their books, show that they deal with conquests of problems.

All growth comes with struggle, and it is the desire to create that makes us endure suffering. We live on in the hope that we will do something we want to do. With St. Paul it was his hope to organize the Church. His dream was that of the political leader, and his life brought him in contact with the large cities. Travelling from city to city, he organized the Church, held conventions, and succeeded in withdrawing the centre of the Church from Jerusalem to Greece and Rome. He even gave his life in trying to convert the people of Rome. As a great organizer and a political leader of the city, he does not use the beautiful language of Christ, who drew His speech from the figures of nature's enchanting flowers and gardens—the language of a suburbanite. However, St. Paul does drive his point home, when he says "our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding . . . glory" (2 Cor. 4:17).

When things go wrong with us city dwellers, it is because of some maladjustment. With St. Paul it was his poor health that interfered with his work, but he bore it patiently. And he had other suffering. At one time he relates how he was stoned and his body dragged from the city as dead. Besides numerous lashings, arrests, trials, and long imprisonments, he was also shipwrecked and washed ashore on a desert isle. Finally, he was long imprisoned before his death at Rome. My friends, compared with St. Paul's sufferings, those of our own appear *paltry* and *trivial.*

St. Paul, as the outstanding Church organizer of his day, was associated with lawyers from boyhood, and had as his friend the physician, St. Luke. It is not surprising that he uses the language of these professional men when he explains the future of the Church. He speaks of balancing an account, and tells that on the side of the debits we should place our sufferings (in Greek, *pathemata,* meaning anything we patiently endure, like sickness), and on the side of credits place the glorious future promised. It has proved, as he said, that the glory will more than balance the debits. St. Paul never lived long enough to see the glory of the Church to which we are heirs. In this promise of a great future he includes the whole world of nature, the animals as well as all

inanimate things. Ahead he can see only sure progress for the world.

We must not be without hope, but look to the glorious future that lies before us. How glorious it would be if all the ideals put into each political party platform could be but partially realized. Then it would make but little difference which party came into power. Thank God we have enough of idealism left to have party platforms, even though it seems to be in vain we look to see them realized.

If we have real hope, so that we actually desire our ideals to materialize, then nothing will stand between us and our goal. We must fight against indifference and put some of our ideals through. Hope will make us prepare for our future as the young student doctors and lawyers do. In the hope of later practice, they study day and night.

Hope is the great engine or motive power that leads to progress and reformation. If you are a follower of Christ, you can abstain from worldly indulgences because of more cherished longings and hopes. Your divine love may excel all worldly loves and passions. The necessary waiting is a beneficial discipline testing perseverance and fidelity.

We believe that the teachings of Christ will lead us to make progress. Forward is our watchword.

The eyes of the noblest men in the past have directed their vision on better days to come. Go into any laboratory of a nation-wide concern like the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, and you will see a great number of physicists and chemists and engineers working to find if they cannot discover some new improvement for their old equipment. This work is all done in the spirit of hope, for who can tell but they may discover some wonderful betterment sufficient for them to scrap their existing equipment, even at a loss of millions. This is hope with a purpose that is laudable. Any purpose is laudable that attempts to render public service. When Langley flew his aeroplane over the Potomac, it was an expression of his hope that his invention could some day be made use of for practical purposes. His hope has now been realized, as he believed

"Someway, somewhere, sometime—
Sweet words of hope sublime;
Someway obstacles will be cleared;
Someway we will pass the tests we feared.
Somewhere we shall find rest from grief;
Somewhere from worry have relief.
Sometime to hope the victory is given.
Sometime this earth exchanged for heaven."

II

THE ADVENTURE OF FAITH

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

"Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught."—St. Luke 5:4.

OUR message bears us away to the Lake of Galilee, to the fishing vessels of James and John and Peter. They must have been rather disturbed on account of the crowds of people who had gathered on the shore near their boats. They had gathered about a Leader who was harangueing them, paying little regard to the fishermen mending their nets beside the boats. Peter's attention was first called to this Leader, when He came to his ship and, getting in, asked him to "thrust out a little from the land." When Peter did this, Christ the Leader "sat down and taught the people out of the ship" with more comfort for all. When He had finished speaking, our Saviour was most grateful for having been taken out in the boat and wished to make some return for it. So He tells the fishermen to "launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught." Simon Peter, with doubt, answers,

"Master, we have toiled all the night and have taken nothing; nevertheless, at thy word, I will let down the net." When they did lower their net, a miracle of success followed. "They enclosed a great multitude of fishes—and filled both ships." The catch was so great that their nets could not hold the great number of fish. Success surely followed from the directions of Christ. It was, of course, a mere temporal success, and success which in a few moments they were able to despise, as Christ promised that they should "catch men." Yet it is success to obey Christ's word.

What does He teach us about success? Let us picture to ourselves this refreshing scene on the shore with our Master teaching from the boat. We may hear Him command the discouraged to take heart, and not give up work. By superior knowledge He knew that we have great shoals of fish in inland lakes, if we can only figure where to locate them. (Tristram's *Natural History of the Bible,* p. 285; also Godet, *in loc.*) But Jesus, in giving the direction at the proper moment and securing the draught at the time when the fish were within reach, showed His command of all the circumstances. This miracle, more than some others, shows the personality of God in Jesus Christ.

How can we command success? The laws of nature hold sway, but the Author of them can cal-

culate to a nicety their working and accommodate Himself or His people through their operation.

As we picture the fishermen mending their nets, they doubtless must have been discouraged from not having caught any fish during the long night. Their plight shows that what they needed was Christ's great master-mind to direct them. Discouragement, my friends, will yield before hope, and hope combined with action under superior knowledge leads to our goal—success. If we fail in our enterprises, we must not give up, but push on into the future and lay our plans with more intelligence. Only then will we gain success.

You ask me what is success, and the answer is found in Christ, Himself, who helped others to succeed. When we say people are successful, we mean that they are gaining success as we see it. There are as many different forms of success as there are people, because it varies with each one of us. You are successful in your own lives when you are happy and contented—perhaps.

Christ met His obligation for the use of the boat as a pulpit, by offering no money to the fishermen, but by giving a bit of successful guidance. *That* is real success—helping others to succeed.

There is a small club of commercial houses that have the distinction of having been in business for more than a hundred years, and passed through the

change from the time when all business was run by an individual who acted as his own bookkeeper, secretary, treasurer and manager. This club, called the "Centenary Association of America," when it met in Philadelphia in 1925, had eighty-nine members, great grandsons and descendants of the original founders over a century ago. But most of these eighty-nine businesses that started under individuals have expanded to such proportions that no one man can attend to all the different departments, even though the concern still remains within the family's control. This all shows the growth of the idea of co-operation and trust in business.

What has tended to create this spirit of co-operation? It is universal. We find it wherever we go. Is it not that Christ paints in their most beautiful colours the virtues of co-operative service; helping these fisher partners to catch fish? The lowliness of it shows the spirit of co-operation. There is no doubt but that it also spells for those who practice it, a great business success. It is the basis of the idea of the business corporation. The idea of the corporation is said to have been known to the ancient Greeks, and Roman Law first discovered the notion of collective persons, "in clearly grasping and distinguishing from its members, the collective whole, as the ideal unity of the

members bound together by the corporate constitution." (Sohm's *Institutes of Roman Law,* 105.) After the fall of Rome, corporations ceased to be of any significance for many centuries. The earliest corporate organizations were largely municipal, charitable, and churchly. With the development of civilization and commerce in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, came the great trading joint stock companies. Familiar to us are the Hudson Bay Company and the Merchant Adventurers who settled Plymouth, New England. Since the last century the growth of the co-operative spirit in America has been tremendous. The movement has been to consolidate into larger units. We see the seed of this movement (so ably illustrated) in Christ's co-operating with the lowly fisher-folk by the Sea of Galilee.

He comes to us in our discouragement, and, taking what we have, turns it into a glowing success. It may even be a success which we shall later surpass as we pass on to greater glory. It was thus the fishermen despised their success as fishermen, when Christ told them He would make them fishers of men. As He called them to successful work, so He calls you and me. Let us co-operate with Him and obey Him as the fishermen did, and launch out into the deep, placing our trust in His wise guidance and counsel. May God

grant that we shall never regret this choice, and also become successful fishers of men for Christ!

The chosen few Christ called of old, and still calls
millions more,
Come, leave your nets, "Come, follow me," He
bids just as of yore.
Strong, valiant souls, leaders of men, and women
pure and true,
Ye shall be others' fishers. Thus He gives all work
to do.
Come, join the ranks. Enlist this day. Be sure
your part is done.
Christ's victory will not be complete until the last
soul's won.

III

THE LETTER AND THE SPIRIT

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

"Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."—MATTHEW 5:20.

NOT only by obeying laws but through the spirit of love do we become right with God. By righteousness, we mean rightness. There are two kinds of righteousness: rightness of action and rightness of spirit, as Christ shows when He says, "It was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment; but I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment."

This shows that Christ came to teach us the great importance of our spirit as shown in our intentions. He shows that we deserve punishment when in anger we intend something wrong to our brother without just cause, and that it is not necessary to complete our act to deserve punishment. On the other hand, if we have no wrong intent

and accidentally, without negligence, take life, we should not be punished like as we had coldly intended to do so with malice and forethought. The spirit with which we look on life is most important.

Christ placed such great stress on having the proper spirit, that His followers have always sought to cultivate it. Some of them, like the Quakers, believe that divine revelation comes into their spirit and guides them as they sit in the silence of meditation, gathered together.

The rightness of the scribes, who were the lawyers, came from the correct knowledge of the Hebrew law. The rightness of the Pharisees was in observing every particular of the Hebrew law. Then do you not see it was impossible for any Hebrew to excel the scribes in their legal knowledge or the Pharisees in their minute observance? What, then, were Christ's followers to understand from His words? Was He putting an impossible problem before them? No. He wished to show them that with man this perfect knowledge and obedience was impractical, and that they must give up depending on their own knowledge and obedience, but, confessing themselves sinners and lawbreakers, they must give their hearts and themselves to God in the spirit of little children. There is righteousness by faith as well as by law.

Faith is good, and hope is good, and the greatest

of these is love. As St. Paul said afterwards, "Though I give my body to be burned and have not charity [love], it profiteth me nothing." This is the great lesson for the present time.

You and I should learn all we can about the Bible, the creeds and the Church, as did the scribes, and so be ready to give a reason for our faith. You and I should obey the Ten Commandments of the Old Testament, and the two commandments, concerning love to God and man, of the New Testament. As the Pharisees wore phylacteries, or small boxes of laws, on their foreheads to keep them mindful, so we should have the law written on our hearts. But more than that, God requires of us to love Him and give our hearts to His service, in helping sufferers and unfortunates.

Modern industrial conditions place new responsibilities upon us and open new opportunities for service. We are just as much responsible for what our machine does as what our hand does. With the automobile, the hit-and-run driver is not to be forgiven easily for avoiding compensation to those he leaves dying in the road. Nobody who believes in the fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man would endeavour to defraud or escape from some one whom he had hurt. If a man ran his own brother down, would he leave him to his fate? Why, then, should we try to avoid paying compen-

sation for damages, or evade opportunity to help? In one state (Massachusetts) the law requires every car-owner to carry insurance to meet these moral duties. The Levite and the priest only passed by on the other side, but who can, after doing the injury with a machine, refuse to give aid?

In injuries to working people, the law has stepped in and required compensation to be given to those injured. The Bar Association had admirably stopped those who would prevent injured workers from obtaining full compensation. In this righteous spirit even every act of aid is a fulfilment of Christ's law of love. For He said, " Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward."

" If Christ's law has never been tried by this world,
Is it not high time to begin?
' Why call ye me Lord, and do not what I say? '
Said the Saviour, accusing of sin.
Not to get into heaven, but get heaven into us,
Is the end of all faith and prayer.
If we've Christ in our hearts, and are doing His work,
His presence makes heaven everywhere."

IV

THE GIFT THAT IS GLORIOUS

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

"The gift of God is eternal life."—ROMANS 6:23.

THE word "eternal," as used of life, means a quality of life. St. Paul promises it shall be given by God to all of us who "by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality" (Rom. 2:7). The word used for "eternal" by St. Paul might be translated "age-long."

Now, what is this gift of age-long life? of what use is it? The best use for age-long life is for love and charity, St. Paul says (I Cor. 13:13).

In the story of man we may learn the story of love and look for the repetition in our own lives. If the use of age-long life is love, then we may well look to the story of love to show us this quality we seek. Let us picture our own human life as the scenes of the development of love pass onward.

There are many forms of love. Let us look at the most common. At first, in the dim ages of Plato's time (*Symposium*), we are carried to a banquet scene where it is asked, "What does love

desire of beauty? " To possess it is all it desires. But there is one kind of love called " being in love " that desires beauty for a future beauty. The lover desires not only his other half, but possession of the beautiful and other new births in beauty. Human nature longs to create; but it is not worth while, save when that which is created is beautiful and lasting. This yearning is the earnest of age-long life. Even in the bird's devotion to its mate and to its young, there is a craving for continued being. As the parents die, the offspring continues carrying on the succession, passing on the sacred torch. Among mankind this is called biological immortality, or age-long life.

But there is more than the age-long common love of offspring. The love of fame is a somewhat brighter image of immortality. The fame of Plato has carried on through the ages. He, like all creative souls, brings into being, not children, but good deeds. In the writings of many authors we have their precious life-blood shed for fame that comes after death. The true order of love is to advance from love of *one* to *all fair forms,* then to fair practices, and, lastly, to fair thoughts. We may gaze at the sunset and see beauty we love; we may do a kindly act and in its beauty show the fairness of our thoughts. Thus a good rule is for us each day to do this—gaze at the sunset, having

done a kindly act and had fair thoughts, or to see something beautiful, do something beautiful, and think something beautiful.

This is true of groups as well as persons. The ratification of the anti-war treaty called the Paris Pact, shows the highest order of love in nations having advanced to the conception of international fairness, justice and arbitration. The spirit of nations supporting the Kellogg multilateral anti-war treaty is a sign of international love that would seem to be worthy of eternal merit.

When Christ was born in the beauty of the starlight, at the wayside manger in Bethlehem, the world received an example of love that eclipsed all others. It was a living exhibit of a love that gave its life in patient service for the whole of mankind. It was such a form of love to God and man, that caused St. Augustine to turn from a life of riotous living and sensuality to the service of his fellowmen. It caused many thousands who could not show the greater love by " laying down " their life for another, to consecrate their whole lives to the service of the Christ.

It was due to such renunciation of worldly loves and pleasures, that many entered the ministry of the Church. This proved the truth that a perfect love between man and woman could exist without physical rapprochement—a love which was wholly

spiritual. An example of this form of intense devotion between man and woman is seen in Dante Alighieri and Beatrice. It was in his ninth year that they first met, according to his *Vita Nuova.* There is only the famous picture of their chance meeting by the river bank to record another meeting; yet out of such a slight acquaintance grew one of the greatest romances. Her name is associated with his entire existence, and the emotions connected with it form the cornerstone of Dante's intellectual and moral life. We do not know that they ever became close friends; but even in exile he remembered her. Her human figure tends to vanish in a blaze of allegorical idealism in Dante's poetry. Here we have the kind of love called " being in love," but we see in it a very high development of love that is above the common form. *The rarer form* of love *is* that for fair thoughts, especially *thoughts of fairness to others.* The highest form of love for the ages (Plato's *Symposium*) is seen in a recent case of a man's reform who had renounced a life of leading others into drunkenness and debauchery. He came to one of our clergy and stated that he had grown to see the tragedies which were being created by illegally supplying (in our bar-rooms) a grade of liquor which was little better than poison. With a true love of fairness and the help of a God-given desire to re-

deem his past time, he resolved to give his life hereafter to the reclaiming of those who have been the victims of his vice, and enlisted his services with the forces of society in reclaiming these unfortunates.

Thus we see that, if love is eternal, this man has gained the eternal quality by realizing his correct course,—fairness to others. In beholding beauty with the mind's eye, he has done the fair thing, which has led to self-sacrificing action in love of his fellows.

May this be our prayer: " By this we know we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."

V

THE BADGE OF DISCIPLESHIP

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."—MATTHEW 7:21.

IN these words of our Master we see the high value placed on works as compared with faith. It is by works that we are to judge of the relative merits of the different political candidates, and not so much by the statement of their faith as contained in the party platforms. Where these platforms contain ideals and beliefs which are exalted, all earnest Christians must hope and pray for their actual working out. But, in the end, most people will judge from past works, not ideals and beliefs stated.

The same idea of comparing faith and works was before St. Paul when he wrote of having "faith so as to remove mountains," yet added if he had not love that works, "it profiteth nothing." Faith is good, and hope is good, but "the greatest of these is love" (I Cor. 13:13). We have faith expressed

by mere words, and actual faith. (The Scriptural quotations in this sermon are taken from the American Revised Version.)

When we picture faith, we can picture the outstretched hand—the hand with the open palm. This posture is typical of those who live by faith in the belief that the goodness of man will provide for them. Look at our beggars, and you see the perfect illustration. It is the beginning of upward progress to have faith and wish that we may attain it. How Christ has shown that the child is blessed in having this quality! He who said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, for to such belong the kingdom of heaven," knew that little children have always had, and will continue to have, as their outstanding characteristic, the virtue of faith. What is it causes the child to rely on its parents for food and drink? It is the most beautiful illustration of what we call faith. In order that this faith will not be violated, there is not a state in Christendom where a parent is not obliged to supply the children's needs. When we, who have been children, become older, as St. Paul says, "we put away childish things," and are expected to grow "in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and men" (St. Luke 2:52).

Then we have a different picture of childlike faith shown in the confession of faith by St. Peter,

who first called our Lord " The Christ, the Son of the living God." In answer to this act of faith, Christ gave him His blessing, for himself and all believers, as St. Augustine says.

With adult faith is often combined the receiving of a gift from another. It is still the open hand of the child, but the giver is very seldom a child. As St. Paul says, now that he has put away childish things, he realizes that faith is good for an adult, but that greater than all are works of charity. These works of love and charity are shown by the helping hand—a hand that is never empty except it is actively working to help. While our Lord speaks of the faith of the child in glowing words, He pays what seems a higher tribute to those of us who feed the faith of their children. He compares those to God who, like Him, " give good gifts unto *their* children." Parents, did not Christ say to you, " Who, if his son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone, or if he ask for a fish will give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him " (Matt. 7:9-11)? While faith gives tremendous power, not everyone that says, Lord, Lord, " Thou art the Christ," like St. Peter, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, although he may have the key

to it. Those who shall enter into the sought-after state are, like all good parents, those who do the will of our Father in heaven.

So we must do the will of God as made manifest in His Son Jesus Christ. Since "by works was faith made perfect," St. James says, "If a brother or sister be naked and in lack of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled; and yet ye give them not the things needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself (St. James 2:22, 15-17).

My friends, between the empty hand of faith and the busy helping hand, which will it be? If we are still children, all we can expect is that we should go on our way groping in the darkness in the faith that we will obtain our goal. We want civic improvement, better living conditions and transit facilities, better schools, and, above all, a greater respect for, and obedience to, our laws. How are we going to obtain all these improvements except by working for them and surrendering ourselves for guidance to the will of God as made manifest in Jesus Christ? Are we still in the state of adolescence that Europe attributes to the New World, in which as a child we must look to others for guidance? No; we have the charitable example of our Master to work by, and, following

Him, cannot go astray. Let us give ourselves in the coming days without neglect to our regular duties, remembering our Master, who said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

VI

TIMES OF TESTING

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

"There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it."—I CORINTHIANS 10:13.

TEMPTATION is the one word that sums up the history of the world, and of every soul in it. As I speak each Sunday, giving illustrations of temptations overcome, there are two or three people come to me and say, "Of course, you meant me." This shows how common our temptations are. Even the saints have had the same common temptations as the rest of us.

Dr. C. I. Scofield, in his exhaustive work—than which there are none more painstaking or encyclopedic in character—makes a division of Biblical history into seven periods. Many others have made divisions similar in character, but varying in number; but, for the sake of clearness, I will follow his division in giving the history of temptation. One or more of these temptations is the pre-

vailing temptation of each age. Any other division of time might have done as well; but some division must be made to show the varying character of the temptations of each age.

"A dispensation is a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God." It is a time of the testing and trying of our faith. "Seven such dispensations are distinguished in Scripture," from the first appearance of man.

The first dispensation was the test of innocency. Man was created innocent, placed in a perfect environment, subjected to an absolutely simple test, and warned of the consequence of disobedience by eating of the forbidden fruit. The woman fell, "being deceived, Adam was not deceived" (I Tim. 2:14), but fell by eating deliberately what Eve gave to him. God restored them to true faith; but the dispensation of innocency cost the loss of the Garden of Eden—a paradise, for ever afterwards barred to them.

The second dispensation was the test of conscience. By disobedience, man came to a knowledge of good and evil; *i. e.*, he knew it was good to obey the known will of God. Through that knowledge conscience awoke to obey God's known will and approach Him through sacrifice. But man's "heart was only evil continually, and it

repented the Lord that he had made man" (Gen. 6:6), and He sent the flood to wipe away his memory.

The third dispensation was over the question of human government. Noah (Gen. 9:24-27) made the race of Canaan to be subject to the government of Shem and Japheth. That burden rested on the whole race, Jew and Gentile, until the failure of the Hebrews resulted (Deut., chap. 28 and 30:1-10) in the judgment of their captivities, and "the times of Gentiles" began (Luke 21:24; Rev. 16:14). The rule of the world has remained in our hands. Have we not also, like the Jews, governed for self and not for our God? What of our politics? The Gentile testing—our testing or temptation will end with the judgment of the nations (Matt. 25:31-46), perhaps a league of nations—who can tell?

The fourth dispensation arose over the question of promise. Abraham was given the promise that his heirs would become a great nation—and possess the land of Canaan. The dispensation of promise ended when the Hebrews rashly accepted the law (Ex. 19:8). While they were in Egyptian captivity, they lost the blessings of the promised land. Moses delivered them from Egyptian slavery, providing the pascal lamb sacrifice for the guilty, and by divine providence brought them

through the Red Sea; but at Sinai they exchanged the dispensation of promise for the law.

The dispensation must be distinguished from the covenant. The dispensation is a way of testing, but the covenant is everlasting. The dispensation of the law was only a period of temptation or discipline under the promise "till the seed should come to whom the promise was made" (Gal. 3:19-29; 4:1-7).

The fifth dispensation deals with the period of temptation or testing of the Hebrews under the law. This period of dispensation of the law extends from Sinai to Calvary—from the Exodus to the Cross. The history of the Hebrews in the wilderness and in the promised land is one long record of violations of the law. The judgment came with Israel and Judah both being led away to a far land in captivity, and culminated in the destruction of Jerusalem by Rome, 70 A. D.

The sixth period of dispensation is that of grace (Luke 21:20-24), in which period we are living today. "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). Grace is "the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man—not by works of righteousness which we have done" (Titus 3:4, 5). It is, therefore, constantly set in contrast to the law, under which God demands righteousness from man

to God; for grace forgives unrighteousness, and is a gift from God to man (Rom. 3:21-22; 8:4; Phil. 3:9). Law is connected with Moses and works; grace with Christ and faith (John 1:17; Rom. 10:4-10). Law blesses the righteous; grace saves the sinner or unrighteous (Ex. 19:5; Eph. 2:6-9). The law requires a *quid pro quo;* that something be given for everything received; but, of course, grace is a gift that comes free (Deut. 28:1-6; Eph. 2:8; Rom. 4:4-5).

As a period of dispensation, grace starts with the completion of Christ's work, through His resurrection (Rom. 3:24-26; 4:24, 25). Legal obedience to the righteous commands of God is no longer necessary for salvation; but all that is required is acceptance of Christ with works of mercy and love as the fruit of repentance and faith (John 1:12, 13; 3:36; I John 5:10-12). The result of this testing by the presence of Christ, was His rejection by the Jews and crucifixion by both Jew and Gentile (Acts 4:27). This testing is still continuing in our day as to the revealed grace of God made manifest in Jesus Christ, and will end with the apostacy of the Christian Church, which shall depart from the true faith in the grace of God, while outwardly professing to be Christian (II Tim. 3:1-8). Apostacy in the Church, as in Israel (Isa. 1:5, 6; 5:5-7), will have its punishment (II Thess.

2:10-12). After this will follow the Apocalyptic judgments, and the reign of Christ during the seventh period of dispensation, still to commence.

We see thus how the Bible divides all known history into seven periods of testing or temptation. I advise you to read it and see how other brave souls have passed through these seasons and periods of trouble and testing. My friends, as in all these temptations there was a way of escape, I believe that you also "may be able to bear it." "God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able." Like a gangplank which bends as we pass over it, and yet does not break, so our faith is tried. Like St. Peter, faith may yield when we thrice deny we ever knew of Christ, but will be renewed in us when we answer Christ's question, "Lovest thou me?" in the affirmative, and through the grace of God our temptations will be overcome.

VII

CHRIST AND THE CITY

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

"He beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now, they are hid from thine eyes."—St. Luke 19:41-42.

IF we picture Christ weeping over Jerusalem, we see one of the most telling scenes in history. His followers, who had come down the Jordan Valley with Him for the festivities in the great city, were preparing a public reception in which the freedom of the city was hoped to be obtained for Him.

Even outside the city at the Mount of Olives "the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; saying, Blessed be the king that cometh in the name of the Lord; peace in heaven and glory in the highest" (St. Luke 19:37-38). Even then the city officials in the crowd, who were watching for any signs of hostility, told Christ to "rebuke" His followers. He answered, "If these should hold their peace,

the stones would immediately cry out" (St. Luke 19:40). And when Jesus drew nigh He saw the city and wept over it, saying, "If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, when thine enemies—shall not leave in thee one stone upon another" (St. Luke 19:42-44). These words of prediction of the ruin of Jerusalem were fulfilled a few years later, when the Emperor Vespasian's son, Titus, laid siege to the city and, after a cruel struggle, captured it and burned the Temple: so that literally not one stone was left upon another. The Mother Church also perished. It was at this vision of the future that Christ wept; for He indeed truly loved that city.

We can read in the Psalms how the Hebrews had listened to the commands of God to leave the land of Egypt where they could enjoy all the comforts of a luxurious city, with its famous restaurants, like the Paris of our own day; they had left this behind for the hardships of the desert with scarcely enough food to keep body and soul together. To them God had appeared in dazzling brilliancy and gave commandments which they obeyed, in spite of the moral weakness of Egypt and the surrounding peoples. Therefore it was that Balaam could not curse a people whom God had so blessed, and

he predicted the upbuilding of a great nation. This prediction was fulfilled, but gradually as the simple life of the desert became replaced with the softened life of the cities, corruption ran rampant through the streets of the Hebrew cities. The battle moved from the battlefields in the open country to the crowded sections of the city and the palaces of the luxurious princes, where every foreign evil was welcomed, and the immigrant vices as well. When justice was perverted through foreign influence and terrorism, and other causes, Isaiah the great prophet arose and said (1:17), "Learn to do well; seek judgment [in justice], relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow."

The fall of Jerusalem may, like *the fall of every man,* be traced chiefly to two causes—intellectual blindness and disobedience. In the Gospel for today our Lord traces it to intellectual blindness; "If thou hadst known—the things which belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes;" and "because thou knewest not the time of" the warning. On another occasion He traces the fall to the obstinate disobedience of the will, when He says, "Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee [to warn thee], how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen

gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! " (Matt. 23:37).

Today let us confine ourselves to the dangers of the soul that come from ignorance, especially wilful intellectual blindness, the rejection of light. If we compare Christ's knowledge of Jerusalem and its life, with Jerusalem's own views upon its own future, we can see how the city deceived itself regarding the true condition of affairs. They hoped for a long, bright future, else why should their leaders have laid up such great fortunes for themselves out of the money-changing business that took place even within the Temple buildings? In this same self-confident manner we may deceive ourselves and thus endanger the good of our souls.

Christ knew that, to Jerusalem, it was the last call to repentance. That soon He would pass away from this world, and that they would have no more opportunities to repent. What a loss did this last call mean to their future as a city, but also in eternity! The other warnings that they had received from the prophets had been forgotten almost as quickly as they had buried them, after killing or stoning them. It was probably the knowledge of these things that caused Christ to weep. For, like those of many of our great cities, the people thought little of their own spiritual hardiness and obedience to commandments; and

gloried rather in their great history and wonderful palaces and buildings, the wealth of which people came from far and near to see, and perhaps undermine. In the wonderful buildings of our time and with pride in our ancient history, we, as they, are apt to overlook the responsibilities that we have and the account that we must render of this trust. Then we, too, are so apt to forget the record of our failures, or heed the warning of conscience. How splendid indeed it would have been, if Jerusalem could have escaped the battering-rams of the Roman armies and, with her walls and buildings standing, held up her head as the birthplace of the Christian Church. But her constant rebellions and bickerings were distasteful to Rome. Rome wanted to unite the known world into union and not have so much dissension. The city in its internal administration did not know its true friends and foes. Christ, who was their real friend, they crucified. Cæsar, to whom they turned Christ over to be crucified by Roman soldiers, later crucified them. Christ offered the city the great opportunity of repentance and of learning of Him, the Prince of Peace, the ways of peace and the things that belonged and would lead to their peace,—the highest ethics the world has ever known. But they thought differently and in disobedience to His godly advice prepared for suicidal revolt against Rome. They

turned their faces away from the light of truth and reason. Christ prayed His Father that they might be forgiven, " for they know not what they do." They knew not the day of their visitation. So the bleak stones of Jerusalem stand today, as a great white witness to the punishment of neglect or wilful disobedience to Christ's commands and words, " Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment; and the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

We see Christ's love for us and our fellow-men in the way He wept over the impending ruin of Jerusalem. May it not be said of us, as He said of Jerusalem, that we knew not the day of His visitation.

Earnestly let us pray—" From hardness of heart and contempt of Thy Word and commandment, good Lord deliver us! " And let us rejoice that there is a spiritual Jerusalem of the future, in which we may be reunited with Christ in the last age or dispensation!

VIII

THE BANE OF SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

"This man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."—St. Luke 18:14.

WE know the story of the two men who went up into the Temple at Jerusalem to plead before the Almighty. The one was the Pharisee who belonged to a group of over six thousand members who devoted themselves to the most scrupulous obedience to the Mosaic law, as explained in the vast commentaries of traditions written by lawyers of those days. To read these books took many years, as one pored over the endless rolls on which they were written. An education of the sort required to make one a Pharisee took such a fortune that only the wealthiest could hope to have their children study for this rôle. Seeking to make religion supreme in the entire life of the nation, they were opposed to the smaller body of the Sadducees who excluded religion from politics. As the Sadducees were the rulers of the

Temple, their main interest was political, and their guiding principle was to keep in with any power that secured to them their monopoly of office. It was probably a few of this group that condemned Jesus to death and gave Him up to Pilate because of their annoyance at the "cleansing of the Temple." The High Priest, Caiaphas, and his father-in-law, Annas, who preceded him as High Priest, had built up one of the greatest fortunes in Jerusalem from the profits derived from the money-changing in the Temple, and other sources. They had one of the finest palaces in Jerusalem, which is shown today.

We know how this Pharisee came into the Temple to plead before his God, and he said, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess." If we analyze this prayer, these offenses which he mentions are all covered in the Jewish law of Moses that was obeyed most carefully by all the ruling classes of Jerusalem, especially the Pharisees and Sadducees. We know that there was a law against taking interest; we know that Isaiah and the prophets exhorted to justice, and we know that the seventh commandment forbade adultery. We read from Leviticus 27:30-34: "And all the tenth of the land, whether of the seed of the land,

or of the fruit of the tree, is Jehovah's; and all the tithe of the herd or the flock, whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto Jehovah God. These are the commandments which Jehovah commanded for the children of Israel in Mount Sinai." This Mosaic law required every good Jew to give one-tenth of his goods to the Temple. It was not so much in obeying these laws that the Pharisee was refused forgiveness, but in his opinion of himself, in that he said, "I thank thee, God, that I am not as other men are;" thus dividing mankind and placing himself in a class absolutely above, he practically claims that he is perfect. Perhaps he did not realize that he was saying this to God, and boasting in pride that he was not like the publican and tax collector who stood nearby praying. How much his claim sounds like the old teaching of the divine right of kings, when it was said, "The king can do no wrong." If this Jewish Pharisee had thought more carefully, he would perhaps have said that others were living who were as good as himself; but this is what he said in his prayer to God, "I thank thee, God, that I am not as other men," and, as we have seen, it was a lie. Is not this man a marvellous self-deceiver? Dear friends, are we not apt, in our careless moments, to say, "Well, thank God, I am not like this, or that person." And are we not

tempted also to come before God with a lie on our lips, saying that we are perfect? This Pharisee was most diligent in observing all the rules and laws of his country.

The value of a law or rule of life is great, because rules help to form habits and therefore to develop character. To see the character of a country, you need only look at their laws to see the temptations they have fought and ruled against. A law or rule of life is on this account a great help to spiritual progress, if that law or rule be the outcome of wholly spiritual devotion to God, but not if a substitute for this. Thus, tithes were the result of the consent of the people to support their priests in the desert of Asia Minor on their journey from Egypt. At the time when the Pharisee was praying in the Temple, the reason for this law, created through spiritual devotion to God, had passed. The people no longer were wanderers, but had settled down, and built a magnificent city. There the high priests no longer were entirely dependent on their fellow-men for their food and raiment, but had become the wealthiest class in Jerusalem. On account of the high priests' great wealth, the income of which Christ stopped when cleansing the Temple of money-changers, they were tempted to, and did, crucify Him. The same thing occurred more than a millennium later when, dur-

ing the Middle Ages, the Church held land stretching for thousands of square miles, and the common prayer of the average man was " from tithes to the Church, dower and taxes, good Lord, deliver us." It was at that time that the Church had become so tremendously wealthy from enforcement of the old Mosaic law, that everybody give one-tenth of their income to the Church regardless of their religion. The common people grew to dislike the Church which forced them to pay taxes. Therefore every night-time as they prayed they offered this prayer. A similar condition exists in Mexico at the present time. Thus we see the ridiculous attitude of a man like the Pharisee so carefully observing a law that had grown out of date and unpopular, and for which no reason, spiritual or otherwise, existed. His fault was deception.

The stages of deception are generally as follows: First, we begin by deceiving our neighbours. Then, before we know it, we come to deceive ourselves. We have caused so much deception around us by deceiving our neighbours, that we can think of nothing but deception, and then we come to such a stage that we deceive ourselves through want of knowing the truth. Finally and most deadly, after we have lost our ideals of truth through deception, we may come before God and try to deceive Him. How well we know that this is of little use, for

those " who worship him should worship him in spirit and in truth " (John 4:23).

Now let us look at the other side of the picture presented in our Gospel for today. The publican, than whom the Pharisee thought he was so much better, " standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other." The publican was the tax-collector whom everyone hated to see when he came about to collect money. He would have been as unpopular today as he was then, but he would have deserved to be hated more in those days. If you had known the great bribery and the extortion indulged in by these men, you would have trembled when one of them approached. They were in the habit of extorting sometimes three or four times the amount of the tax from the citizens of Jerusalem, because they would threaten to have them arrested and tried before the brutal Roman soldiers who goaded them at every opportunity. Just as every cheat is hated by those with whom he comes in contact, so these men were despised. But, hated though this man was, he at least knows his own sins and comes to God, with a temporarily honest heart and honest words on his lips. If we know ourselves truly, we shall realize our errors

and our need of divine mercy. This was precisely the case with the tax-collector, so beautifully expressed in the brief prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Let us ask ourselves which of these two men we are most like. Are we humble, penitent and truthful like the tax-collector, or are we proud, contented and false like the Pharisee? May we ever come to the house of God with truth on our lips and in our hearts!

IX

LOVE SUPERIOR TO LAW

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

"If there had been a law given that could make alive, truly righteousness would have been of the law."—GALATIANS 3:21.

IN this letter of St. Paul to the Galatians he is dealing with the vital question of the value of law, and its effect on us. The people of Galatia who had been converted to Christianity had been misbehaving themselves, and through a very strict observance of the Jewish law had snubbed and offended some of their poorer brethren, who could not afford to take the time to follow closely such seemingly foolish laws that regulated even one's bathing and eating. They were trying to make the Church an exclusive clique of ritualists. It is hard to imagine St. Peter, the rough and ready fisherman, indulging in the habit of bathing himself all day long, at intervals, with perfumery and incense-burning, and anointing of people and things, with sacred oil from the Temple. Yet the letter of St. Paul tells us of the argument that he had with St. Peter over the strict observance of the

Jewish law-creed. This law-creed, which is found in the second law-code of the Old Testament (Deut. 6:4-9), tells that these Jewish laws should be learned by heart (comprising thousands of provisions) and taught to our children, and spoken of by us when we sit at home or walk in the street, or go to bed and arise. We are even told to bind insignias of them upon our heads, and wear them hanging from our head between the eyes. We are told, also, to put insignias of them wherever we enter into buildings, on the gates and doorposts. It is truly hard to imagine St. Peter covered with these insignias, kissing the sacred images on every gate and doorpost every time he went in and out from his house. But this was the phase through which the Church in Galatia was passing, and against which St. Paul warned them.

What is the value of these laws of the Jews, which even the Hebrews of today say have not been abrogated, and are not regarded as burdensome to follow? St. Paul asks us this question. He suggests an answer to us—that a law which can create or save life is higher than any other laws. What does he mean by saying, " If there had been a law given that could make alive, truly righteousness would have been of the law." The thousand provisions of the law of those days, and of today, tell us what is considered right and wrong, but they

do not give us the spirit in which to interpret them and live by. They are like the fine mechanical devices in subway and train motors for safety, which break down and fail—only the human spirit can save from a wreck. Yet, amidst all the busy confusion and scarceness of time to study the provisions of the law, Jesus turns to us, and says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself. . . . On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matt. 22:37, 40). That was the substance of the answer Christ gave to the lawyer who asked him what was necessary in order to have eternal life. This lawyer, long dead, asked the same question that many of us would have asked if Christ were present at this very instant among us. Who among us does not hope for a long and useful life in which we may be blessed to have truth revealed or contemplate the beauties of God's nature? Even the majority of the Jews before whom Christ was tried, and St. Paul also, believed and still believe in a future life at the resurrection. St. Paul was clever enough to remember this, when he was arrested in the Jewish Temple and taken before the Jewish law-court. It was only the Sadducee party among the Hebrews, that did not believe in the Resurrection. There-

fore, when he saw in the court-room that there were some present whom he knew did believe in the Resurrection or future life after death, he appealed to them. The believers in the Resurrection in the court-room were angered when St. Paul turned to them and told them that he had been arrested for his belief in the future life, and caused such a riot that the High Priest who acted as judge had to call in the police and finally the militia. "And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should be torn to pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them and bring him into the castle" (Acts 23).

The whole occasion of this riot and arrest of St. Paul was that he entered the Jewish Temple to pray and purify himself by washing and shaving there, and the Jews said, "This is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the Jewish people and the law and this place; and moreover he brought Greeks also into the temple and hath defiled this holy place" (Acts 21:28). In his love for all men he tried to be all things to all men, in order by any means to save some. He went into the Jewish Temple to observe the Jewish law about purifications by washing and shaving, and he saw no reason why he should not bring Greeks along with him. If he did bring Greeks with him, as he

was accused, he most certainly did break the Jewish law; for they even had signs at the entrance of the Temple forbidding any foreigner to enter in and take part in the services, under penalty of death. All foreigners were considered as unclean. St. Paul was, of course, born a Jew and studied at the feet of the leading law-professor of his day, Gamaliel, the grandson of the world-famous Hillel. He was a most liberal teacher and did not slavishly stick to the letter of the law. Perhaps it was from him that St. Paul got his liberal views as to the value of law, and from travel in neighbouring countries where entirely different laws existed. He may have been astonished at the conflict of these foreign laws with the laws of the Jews just as we today are amused in Christendom with the conflict of laws. The glory of the Romans, as contrasted with the Jews, was that they admitted other peoples' right to follow their own laws and customs; for, after all, they are human beings, and entitled to freedom of choice. As stated by the head of Columbia University last summer, it is impossible that we should ever expect to have the same laws for all countries. People do not all live alike, depending on climate and circumstances that vary with each people. Therefore they have different laws to meet the different conditions of living, and forbid certain things against which they wish to

legislate. Thus the life of a people makes a law instead of the law making the life. The law was "added because of transgressions," and from the transgressions and errors of life the inspiration to create laws arises. But you must have the life before you can have the law, and the man before you can make laws that he shall obey. Often the contrary effect of the law is to crush out life and destroy it. This is particularly true, as we know, from the popular complaint against many complex laws which are called red tape. Let us hope the law of the future will not be long, wearisome to read or complicated, but a law which he who runs may read and understand with simplicity and confidence.

Christ, in giving us a summary of the law that the man who runs may read, is yielding to the common desire of most of us, to have some law to follow which we can clearly understand. He tells us of our duty to God and to our neighbour, and explains who our neighbour is by painting the picture of the wounded traveller whom the good Samaritan took under his protection. Thus He shows us that our merciful kindness to strangers and travellers is more important than the literal interpretation of laws, which may prohibit people like the Jews from touching or helping a dying stranger. The Jewish law required any one, who touched a dying or dead

man, to pay a large fine to the Temple and to pay for religious services to purify himself. It would seem that a strict interpretation of this law would destroy life rather than help to preserve it; for would not you or I have been tempted to let a wounded body by the side of the road alone, for fear that we might find that was a dead man, and thus we would be put to such needless trouble of being purified? In a case of not knowing if a man is wounded or dead it would be safer not to try to revive him for fear that he might die on one's hands. Therefore the natural effect of such a law strictly construed is to let the wounded man die by the side of the road without help. That is what St. Paul meant when he implied that the righteous law was the one that could make life, and the unrighteous law, destroy it.

Christ set an example of free interpretation of the law when He said, "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets; I came not to destroy, but rather to fulfil. . . . Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. . . . Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."

To suggest a principle to guide us in the higher free interpretation of the ancient law, so that we may know when to make an exception of the strict application, Christ gave us a new commandment: "Love one another, even as I have loved you."

X

THE INNER VOICE

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

"*He that is of God heareth God's words.*"—JOHN 8:47.

LET me tell you of a meeting of students I attended recently at a great university. The narration will aid us in realizing that we have an inner spiritual teacher who speaks to us, which is the voice of God. The speaker was a good man, one who claimed that he had been guided by the inspiration of God in all the crucial periods of his life.

He told us how, when he was a law student, he suddenly felt a strong call to enter the ministry of the Church. As he knelt in prayer at public worship, perplexed, something inside him suddenly said: "Follow Me. Leave your cares for the future and take up My service." He then began his witness for Christ, and followed His banner to a foreign land. As he parted from his invalid mother to go to the mission field, he heard this Voice directing him not to let even his mother's illness stand in the way. He left for India, praying for her, and she recovered.

After eight years in his chosen field, he once more visited America on leave of absence. Returning to India again, he suffered a nervous breakdown, and was obliged to take rest in the mountains. The doctors finally gave him up. One day, he entered a church to pray, and again heard the divine voice. This time it whispered: "My grace is sufficient for thee, for My power is made perfect in weakness."

Heartened by divine encouragement, he soon recovered his health and went on for twelve years, bearing witness for Christ. He told, everywhere, of these experiences in which he had obtained the guidance of God. Up to the present time, he has never had a return of any troubles or doubts. He realizes that with many people these visions of guidance never take place, but in great emergencies, he knows this Voice never fails *him*. Thus it is that, this great missionary, in all crises of his life, has learned to listen for divine direction. Needless to say that, as a result of his conviction of the indwelling presence of God, what is perhaps the most successful recent book on missions was written by him.

My friends, do you not also have a sense of the presence of God? As you go about your duties, can you not also feel His offered guidance? Just as in cases of mental telepathy, word-messages of

others are heard at great distances, so, in some such way, we seem to hear a heavenly message. Sir Oliver Lodge says that this thought-transference is like an extra sense, which acts as an unusual means of conveyance. In some such way we may all come into touch with the Infinite; but we must cultivate meditation and introspection to make our lives more spiritual.

Only recently, a friend engaged in concert work at Chicago, told me of her experiences. At a time when she was a musical student in Berlin, she met a friendly-acting lady who invited her to visit. Imagining nothing to be wrong with the invitation, she started to go to this woman's home, but on seeing the house with the window-shades tightly drawn, something warned her not to enter and, somewhat abruptly, she refused. Her fears were correct, for the house was a gambling hell, and shortly after, this woman, the proprietor, and other inmates were arrested. Later, her family having lost a large fortune, she came to be in need, and prayed God to help her think of some way to make a living. As she prayed it came to her to look for work among her American friends. This was in Milan, so she hastened to the American Express office in the Italian city, and, stating her wishes, that very day obtained employment. God, in His providence, had answered her prayer.

I might go on indefinitely telling you of many other good people who have rejoiced in God's guidance. In past ages, many of these were regarded as being saints. Today, sceptical people do not credit divine interference with earthly affairs, yet, by all true Christians it is believed that God speaks through the Holy Spirit. The founder of the Quakers, George Fox, in his autobiography, relates how he was in constant communication with God. There is no doubt that through this direction, he was enabled to help the poor and needy, and relieve many prisoners rotting in filthy gaols.

Very few of us are so far removed from Him, that we cannot obtain help by asking God to show us how to solve our troubles. If we truly intend to be loving and dutiful children, He will as Father show us the way and we will hear His counsel. But first we must ask His guidance, as Tennyson has so well said:

"Speak to Him for He hears, and spirit with spirit can meet.
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet."

How unnatural it would be for children not to understand their heavenly Father's words or to keep in communication with him! God is a spirit, and they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth. Spiritual things are spiritually

discerned. There are no spiritual deaf mutes. The mind, heart and conscience must be ever audient to spiritual messages. Some of the strongest warnings in the Bible are directed by our Lord against those who have eyes to see and see not, who have ears to hear, and hear not.

Yes, it is through our own sin, if we become blind to those things of faith, and deaf to Jehovah's warnings. Man's chief end is to glorify God; and if we have eyes and ears for the things only of time and sense, we have lost the main object of our existence, are ingrates and no longer sons of God.

"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth. So is every one that is born of the spirit." Jesus speaks the language of heaven—we must know that language, for to be spiritually minded is life everlasting, but to be carnally minded is death. By night and day, on sea and land, the soul born again is in communion with its Creator. The loyal Christian by prayer keeps his mind ever open to learn his heavenly Father's will, and thanks God daily for the gift of spiritual understanding, which leads him to seek the good and shun the evil all the days of his life, through Christ his Saviour and the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

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